

and place, where generations of American representatives have marked tragedies and triumphs in the halls of this Republic, today we mourn the worst of those disasters ever to afflict the people of Rhode Island. To date, we have lost 99 of our families, friends, and neighbors to this terrible tragedy. That is nearly half as many Rhode Islanders as were lost in the entire Vietnam War in our State of Rhode Island.

A disaster of this magnitude in a community like Rhode Island has tested the limits of our collective comprehension, resilience, and grief. While we mourn, we still hold out the hope, and offer our prayers, to the 190 men and women still fighting their injuries across New England, as many as 40 in the hospital. Their struggles will be difficult, the road ahead challenging; but the people of Rhode Island have proven that community togetherness and family can see us through anything. We offer them our support and encouragement today, and we promise that we will still be there in the months and the years ahead to ensure that we never forget that they are going to be living with these injuries for the rest of their lives.

Madam Speaker, but for the brave first responders who came immediately and professionally to their call to duty, many of those in the hospitals today would no longer be with us, and most assuredly the number of those still recovering from their injuries would be much, much higher. The emergency personnel on duty who rushed to the scene, to those who simply passed or heard through the grapevine about the tragedy and selflessly responded, the men and women of this House today say "thank you" to all of them. They worked without thought for themselves that freezing night, and afterwards, not only to free the trapped from the inferno, and tended through their own tears to the cries of the wounded, but long past the tragedy to tend to the emotional and psychological wounds that continue to inflict these victims.

Madam Speaker, what we ask of first responders in these situations is to be superhuman in the face of staggering human suffering. Most of us spend our lives doing our best to keep ourselves and our loved ones out of situations that the police, fire, and medical personnel rush into every single day, day after day. Their heroism in this tragedy does not go unnoticed. It might be added that with so much evil emanating from the events of 9-11, it is fitting to acknowledge that our State would not have been able to react as quickly as it had were it not for the lessons learned in that tragedy.

Also, the leadership shown at so many levels of government is inspiring to those of us who believe that there are indeed good and honorable people in government service. I want to join my colleague, the gentleman from Rhode Island, in recognizing all those who he recognized in his remarks; but I too want to pay particular attention

to our new Governor, Governor Carcieri, who has shown tremendous leadership under pressure. The compassion and personal touch that he has brought to our State has truly been inspirational. More than any other person, the Governor has held our State together through this tragedy.

So while we continue to mourn for those who have walked on from this world and offer our prayers to those still fighting to return to good health, let us help to lessen their grief by showing our gratitude to all those who have helped them through this adversity.

There will be, unfortunately, no shortage of time to grieve for the mother that will not be able to open the presents with her children at the holidays. There is no shortage of time to grieve for the brother who will not walk down the aisle with his new bride. There is no shortage of time to grieve for the spouse who will not celebrate her next anniversary with her husband, the grandfather who will not see his grandchildren graduate from college, or the child who will take his first steps without his parents to see him. Many Rhode Islanders will have the rest of their lives for these somber memories. Now is a time for remembrance of how the human spirit, above all, arises in times of tragedy, because that is the only thing, besides the passage of time, that will help ease our current pain.

Unlike other no-less-painful losses we experience in the course of our lives, too many young lives were lost this horrific night. This incident has reminded me of the words that my father spoke at my cousin, John F. Kennedy, Jr.'s, memorial service. He said: "He was lost on that troubled night, but we will always wake for him, so that his time, which was not doubled, but cut in half, will live forever in our memory, and in our beguiled and broken hearts."

Madam Speaker, our hearts are broken; and those who are lost will no doubt live forever in our memory.

I want to thank the gentleman from Rhode Island once again for all the work that he has done representing his district through these difficult times. I know that the people who have entrusted their faith to him have been well served, and I appreciate this opportunity to rise in support of his resolution and strongly urge my colleagues to give it the support that it deserves.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to commend both the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. LANGEVIN) and the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. KENNEDY) for bringing this great tragedy to our attention.

I also want to join with them in commending all of those who rose to the occasion, the policemen; the firemen; the Red Cross; emergency medical services personnel; mental health centers, crisis counselors; and even undertakers in my town, like Leak and Sons

Funeral Home, who buried seven people without cost and greatly reduced the cost for an eighth person; radio stations; Salem Baptist Church, New Mount Pilgrim Baptist Church; the Push Rainbow; WGCI Radio; and all of those who have contributed in setting up educational funds for the children of those whose parents lost their lives in the E2 tragedy.

Our country has a tendency to rise up when there is a special need, and I commend all of those who took note of the tragedy in Rhode Island, as well as the tragedy at the E2 in Chicago.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TURNER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 85.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. TURNER of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

OBSERVER STATUS FOR TAIWAN AT WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY IN MAY 2003 IN GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

Mr. CHABOT. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 441) to amend Public Law 107-10 to authorize a United States plan to endorse and obtain observer status for Taiwan at the annual summit of the World Health Assembly in May 2003 in Geneva, Switzerland, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 441

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. AMENDMENTS TO PUBLIC LAW 107-10.

(a) FINDINGS.—Section 1(a) of Public Law 107-10 (115 Stat. 17) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(14) The government of Taiwan, in response to an appeal from the United Nations and the United States for resources to control the spread of HIV/AIDS, donated \$1,000,000 to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria."

(b) PLAN.—Section 1(b)(1) of Public Law 107-10 (115 Stat. 17) is amended by striking "May 2002" and inserting "May 2003".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CHABOT. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

Mr. CHABOT. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to express my strong support for this legislation, Madam Speaker. My friend, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN), has worked long and hard to make Taiwan's participation in the WHO a reality, and we also want to thank the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) for his leadership in this area as well. As in years past, I am pleased to join with them in this effort.

The good people of Taiwan have a great deal to offer the international community. It is terribly unfortunate that even though Taiwan's achievements in the medical fields are substantial, and it has expressed a repeated willingness to assist both financially and technically in WHO activities, it has not been allowed to do so because of strenuous opposition from the Communist Chinese dictatorship.

My colleagues may recall the travesty that occurred back in 1998, when Taiwan suffered from a serious entovirus outbreak which killed 70 Taiwanese children and infected more than a thousand.

□ 1500

The WHO was unable to help.

In 1999, a tragic earthquake in Taiwan claimed more than 2,000 lives. Sadly, we learned in published news reports that the People's Republic of China demanded that any aid for Taiwan provided by the United Nations and the Red Cross receive prior approval from the dictators in Beijing. Yet when other nations face similar crises, Taiwan stands ready to help.

Our friends in Taiwan were among the first to offer assistance to the victims of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on our Nation. They provided generous humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan. They have been leaders in addressing global health issues and as this legislation notes, "The government of Taiwan, in response to an appeal of the United Nations and from the United States for resources to control the spread of HIV/AIDS, donated \$1 million to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria."

Madam Speaker, many of us have been disappointed by our government's lack of effort to assist Taiwan in its attempts to obtain WHO observer status at the annual World Health Assembly in Geneva. We have expressed our concerns to the State Department, and most recently, a bipartisan group of 64 Members of this body sought the personal assistance of Secretary Powell in this matter. We are hopeful that our delegation to the upcoming Geneva conference will stand strongly in favor of Taiwan's candidacy.

Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN), the

gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) and also the gentleman from Illinois (Chairman HYDE) for his prompt consideration of this bill in the Committee on International Relations. We have been working quite some time for this, and I thank Members for continuing to work on this important issue. I urge adoption of this legislation.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I strongly support H.R. 441, and urge all of my colleagues to do so as well. I would like to commend my colleague, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) for his persistence in pushing for Taiwan's observer status at the World Health Organization. I also wish to acknowledge the chairmanship of the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE) on this critically important subject, and that of the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT).

Madam Speaker, by battling the spread of infectious diseases and increasing the quality of health care to the global community, the World Health Organization makes a significant contribution to our national security. As we meet in this Chamber today, the WHO is dealing with an outbreak of Ebola in Africa, implementing new strategies to stop the spread of the deadly HIV/AIDS virus, and teaching the developing world how to stop the transmission of tuberculosis.

Madam Speaker, the fight for quality health care around the globe will never cease. As a result, the World Health Organization and its member countries must look for help from every nation to strengthen the work of the organization. Unfortunately, strong and consistent opposition from the Chinese government in Beijing has repeatedly stopped the people of Taiwan from contributing to the work of the WHO.

It is true that observer status for Taiwan will not come easy. Beijing holds sway over many WHO members, but the facts in support of Taiwan's case are clear and compelling, and support will undoubtedly build over time with active American engagement. Taiwan is one of our strongest allies in the Asia Pacific region. It is a beacon of democracy for people around the globe.

Taiwan has the resources and the expertise to make a significant contribution to the work of the World Health Organization. The case for Taiwan as a member of WHO is clear and compelling, and I hope our administration will actively support this important initiative. I strongly support H.R. 441. I urge all of my colleagues to do so as well.

Ms. BORDALLO. Madam Speaker, today, I join my colleagues in support of H.R. 441 authorizing a U.S. plan to endorse and obtain observer status for Taiwan at the annual summit of the World Health Assembly in May 2003 in Geneva. I want to thank Congressman Sherrod Brown for his continued commitment to this cause.

The Constitution of the World Health Organization states, "the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition." Taiwan's participation in the organization advances this principle.

Taiwan has made many positive contributions that benefit our country and help the international community attain the health goals set by the World Health Organization. Advancing Taiwan's participation in the WHO would provide the people of Taiwan more opportunities to participate in international health initiatives.

Taiwan's willingness to come to the aid of the people of El Salvador in the wake of the devastating earthquake in January 2001 is indicative of their commitment to global health. In the days following the earthquake, the Taiwanese government sent 2 rescue teams that included emergency, medical and engineering specialists to assist in the rescue and recovery efforts. In addition, the Taiwanese government donated \$200,000 in relief aid to the Salvadoran government.

The WHO Constitution also states, "the health of all peoples is fundamental to the attainment of peace and security and is dependent upon the fullest co-operation of individuals and States." In advancing the participation of Taiwan in the WHO, we are increasing global cooperation to address the pressing health concerns of our time. I strongly commend H.R. 441 to my colleagues and urge its passage.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Madam Speaker, I strongly support H.R. 441, and I would like to thank my colleagues on the International Relations Committee and the Congressional Taiwan Caucus for their support as well.

For the past few years, we have been pushing for Taiwan's observer status at the WHO. I don't know about the rest of you, but I'm starting to experience déjà-vu on this issue. Congress has addressed this several times, and I will continue to raise it until we have a resolution.

The World Health Organization makes a major contribution to the international community each and every day. The WHO has programs to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases, to support the development of basic health care services throughout the developing world, and to provide humanitarian aid to those in need.

In this growing struggle, the WHO and its member countries should be looking for help wherever they can get it. Unfortunately, Taiwan's efforts to obtain observer status to the annual World Health Assembly meetings in Geneva have been blocked.

While the Administration has indicated support for Taiwan's bid for WHO observer status, it is unwilling to match the rhetoric with action. The State Department argues that the majority of WHO members would never support observer status for Taiwan, and therefore the U.S. shouldn't make a concerted effort on Taiwan's behalf. Well I say, let's find out.

The Administration must make a concerted effort to ensure Taiwan's participation in the WHO. The bid may fail, but Taiwan won't be allowed to participate if we do not make the case of its involvement.

Taiwan is a strong, democratic ally. It has developmental and humanitarian resources that would make a substantial contribution to

the WHO's mission. The people of Taiwan are volunteering these resources to fight global epidemics, and we are turning them away at the door. They have demonstrated this time after time—in Haiti; in El Salvador; and more recently by contributing a million dollars to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria. The world needs all the help it can get. Taiwan is not asking to join the WHO as a state, but rather as an observer. The case for observer status at the WHO is clear, and the Bush Administration should make it happen.

I strongly support H.R. 441, and urge my colleagues to do so as well.

Mr. WU. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support to H.R. 441, a bill to authorize the United States to seek observer status for Taiwan within the World Health Organization (WHO).

Every May, the World Health Assembly meets to consider the acceptance of new members to the WHO. Unfortunately, even as Taiwan is among the leaders in Asia in important health indicators, such as life expectancy and infant mortality, it is unable to contribute to the WHO.

While nationhood is a membership requirement, the WHO does provide observer status to such entities as the Vatican, the Knights of Malta, and the Palestinian Liberation Organization. As a self-governing and democratic island of twenty-three million people, and as a potential member with a great deal to contribute to the WHO, I strongly support WHO observer status for Taiwan.

As we once again approach the annual World Health Assembly, I urge Secretary Colin Powell and Secretary Tommy Thompson to work with our friends around the world to obtain WHO observer status for Taiwan. I urge my colleagues to vote yes on H.R. 441.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 441, a bill endorsing observer status for Taiwan at the annual summit of the World Health Organization in May 2003. I thank my good friend, Mr. BROWN of Ohio, for introducing the bill, and I look forward to voting for it.

Madam Speaker, over the years, this body has been divided on a variety of foreign policy issues. What the House has not been divided on, however, is its support for Taiwan, especially as it pertains to its status in the World Health Organization. The fact remains that Taiwan's exclusion from the WHO not only hurts Taiwan, but also the entire international community.

The WHO's constitution states that "the enjoyment of the highest standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition." Yet, the constitution of the WHO has been disregarded when the inclusion of Taiwan in the WHO, even at observer status, has been laid on the table. This time for this to change is now.

Few recall that Taiwan was an original member of the WHO, participating as a full member from 1948 until 1972. The United Nations' 1972 decision to award Taiwan's seat to the People's Republic of China resulted in Taiwan's replacement at the WHO. Since then, Taiwan has sought to be readmitted into the WHO at the same time it has built one of the world's most dynamic free market economies and become a leading technological and scientific population.

Tragically, the world community has never fully benefited from the medical advancements made by Taiwanese doctors and scientists because Taiwan lacks WHO membership. Taiwan enjoys one of the highest life expectancy rates in Asia, has relatively low infant and maternal mortality rates, and has eradicated major infectious diseases such as cholera, smallpox, and polio. Additionally, Taiwan's government was the first in the world to provide children with free hepatitis B vaccinations. Until the international community recognizes that each country in the world will benefit multi-fold from Taiwan's inclusion in the WHO, political pressure from the People's Republic of China will trump the spread of Taiwan's medical advancements.

Madam Speaker, health has no borders, and certainly neither does disease. Taiwan's 23 million citizens suffer every single time relief is delayed simply because Taiwan is not a part of the WHO. Likewise, the world community suffers each time its access to Taiwan's medical advancements is limited for the same reason.

Taiwan's readmittance to the WHO is long overdue. With passage of this bill today, the State Department is again given the necessary tools to push forward on Taiwan's request. H.R. 441 is not a political statement against the People's Republic of China. Instead, it is recognition of opportunity for the entire world community. The successes of Taiwan's medical experts must no longer remain locked in a chamber of politics, and access to these ideas must be extended to all countries.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill. May we all look forward to a day when Taiwan is admitted back into the World Health Organization, an organization it helped build 55 years ago.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 441, a resolution to authorize a United States plan to endorse and obtain status for Taiwan at the annual summit of the World Health Assembly in May 2003 in Geneva, Switzerland.

In response to an appeal from the United Nations and the United States, the government of Taiwan donated \$1,000,000 to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Taiwan has also been a sovereign state since its founding in 1912. Although China has exercised control over Taiwan, Taiwan is a democratic and free society duly elected by the people.

As a sovereign state, Taiwan has acceded to the World Trade Organization and, despite the PRC's objections, I believe it is time for Taiwan to also obtain status as a member of the World Health Organization.

I fully support the intent of H.R. 441 and I also urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CHABOT. Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 441.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of

those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. CHABOT. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

COMMEMORATING 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF HISTORIC RESCUE OF 50,000 BULGARIAN JEWS FROM THE HOLOCAUST

Mr. CHABOT. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 77) commemorating the 60th anniversary of the historic rescue of 50,000 Bulgarian Jews from the Holocaust and commending the Bulgarian people for preserving and continuing their tradition of ethnic and religious tolerance, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 77

Whereas the people of the United States and the Republic of Bulgaria respect all faiths, including Judaism and Jewish culture;

Whereas during World War II, despite being allied with Germany, Bulgarians did not cede to Nazi pressure to fully enforce anti-Jewish legislation and resisted orders to deport their Jewish compatriots to Nazi concentration camps;

Whereas in the spring of 1943 the Bulgarian people succeeded in preventing the deportation of 50,000 Jews to such camps;

Whereas it is acknowledged with sadness that the deportation of over 11,000 Jews from Thrace and Macedonia, territories which were administered by Bulgaria at that time, to Nazi concentration camps, took place;

Whereas Bulgaria was the only European country during World War II to increase its Jewish population;

Whereas members of the Bulgarian Parliament, the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, King Boris III, politicians, intellectuals, and citizens all played a part in the resistance to Nazi pressure to carry out the deportation;

Whereas March 2003 marks the 60th anniversary of Bulgaria's refusal to deport its Jews to Nazi concentration camps;

Whereas the Bulgarian people today preserve and continue their tradition of ethnic and religious tolerance; and

Whereas President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Simeon Saxe-Coburg Gotha are leading the United States and Bulgaria into a long-term strategic partnership: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress—

(1) commemorates the 60th anniversary of the historic rescue of 50,000 Bulgarian Jews from the Holocaust and commends the Bulgarian people for preserving and continuing their tradition of ethnic and religious tolerance; and

(2) reiterates its support for strong ties between the United States and Bulgaria.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT).